

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 25.6%

Weekly Readings will cover: 1 Samuel 16 through 1 Samuel 22, with Psalms 34, 56, 57, 59 & 142, 1 Chronicles 12:8-18

Sunday: 1 Samuel 16

Monday: 1 Samuel 17

Tuesday: 1 Samuel 18

Wednesday: 1 Samuel 19 & Psalm 59

Thursday: 1 Samuel 20

Friday: 1 Samuel 21, Psalm 56 & Psalm 34

Saturday: 1 Samuel 22, 1 Chronicles 12:8-18, Psalm 142, & Psalm 57

Current # of email addresses in the group: 602

On October 21st 2022 I sent out week 1 of our new 3-year reading program. Which means we have been studying the Bible in this deep-dive format for just over a year now.

Congratulations!!! However, this also gives me a good opportunity to see how long this program is going to take at the pace we've been going. Based on the number of breaks we took last year and the amount we covered each day, this will likely take 3 ½ to 4 years to complete. Depending on how I count our progress we are somewhere between 25.6% to 27.9% through the Bible. We are making good progress and I hope each of you is finding the daily studies useful and interesting. Thank you for going on this journey with me!

Website archive location for audio files & PDFs:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 44

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 281 - SUNDAY: November 5th

1 Samuel 16

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "The search for a new king begins appropriately enough in Bethlehem, meaning "House of Bread," for out of David's lineage would spring the Messiah, the true bread from heaven (1 Samuel 16:1-4; Micah 5:2; John 6:58). Bethlehem had been

the town of Ruth and Boaz. Indeed, Jesse and his family were their direct descendants.

Young David was a man after God's own heart, who, unlike Saul, would perform all of God's will (Acts 13:22; Psalm 40:8). The fact that God sought those who would serve Him with all their heart was well known (12:20; 13:14; Deuteronomy 6:5). We would do well to emulate this desired quality in our own lives by studying David's relationship with God.

The name David means "Beloved." His name is mentioned more than a thousand times in the Scriptures. David as shepherd (1 Samuel 16:11) was a picture of Jesus Christ. First of all, Jesus is the *Good Shepherd* who gives His life for the sheep (John 10:11; Psalm 22). Secondly, Jesus is the *Great Shepherd* who rules from heaven interceding with the Father for us (Hebrews 13:20; Psalm 23). And finally, Jesus is the *Chief Shepherd* who brings the Kingdom of God, rewarding His own (1 Peter 5:4; Isaiah 40:11; Psalm 80:1).

David was anointed, i.e. set apart for a special purpose, by Samuel (1 Samuel 16:13). Actually, this was the first of three anointings of David revealed in the Scriptures. You can read of the second anointing that takes place on the occasion of David assuming the kingship of Judah in 2 Samuel 2:4. And he is later anointed king of all Israel in 2 Samuel 5:3.

Saul, on the other hand, is rejected by God. The departure of God's Spirit leaves him in a terrible spiritual, mental and emotional state. And to start with, Saul was a man who exhibited weakness in his character, such as needing the approval of men (1 Samuel 15:30). The removal of God's Spirit only made things worse.

Amazingly, David, a talented shepherd boy, had already achieved notoriety at a young age, not only for his musical ability, but also for his

fighting skills (verse 18). He was a levelheaded, handsome young man with a pleasing personality—a natural to be chosen to perform in the court of the king. Saul immediately took to David with a real affection, making him his armor-bearer. David's performance of soothing music on the harp was able to settle and refresh the disturbed state of Saul's mind." [END]

Verse 1 – This verse seems to indicate that God understood Samuel initially being heartbroken as Saul's disobedience and ultimate rejection, but that at some point his continued grieving had gone on too long. He needed to be in alignment with what God was doing and get on with his work for Him.

Verse 4 – Why were the elders afraid? The JFB commentary states: "Beth-lehem was an obscure town, and not within the usual circuit of the judge. The elders were naturally apprehensive, therefore, that his arrival was occasioned by some extraordinary reason, and that it might entail evil upon their town, in consequence of the estrangement between Samuel and the king." [END]

John Gill's commentary adds: "for he being now an old man, and seldom went abroad, they concluded it must be something very extraordinary that brought him thither; and they might fear that as he was a prophet of the Lord, that he was come to reprove them, or denounce some judgment upon them for their sins." [END]

Verse 5 – In Exodus 19:14 the people sanctified themselves by washing their clothes. Adam Clarke's commentary states: "Change your clothes, and wash your bodies in pure water, and prepare your minds by meditation, reflection, and prayer;"

Verse 6 – Eliab (aka Elihu (compare 1 Chronicles 27:18)) was Jesse's firstborn son (see 1 Chronicles 2:13 & 1 Samuel 17:13).

Verse 9 – Shammah (aka Shimeah in 1 Chronicles 2:13) was the third son (see 1 Samuel 17:13).

Verse 12 – Here we are introduced to David. Jewish historian Josephus says that David was 10 years old here, while others believe he was upwards of 15. I think 15 is the absolute oldest he could be. Later we will see that only the three oldest sons named in this section go off to fight the Philistines (1 Samuel 17:13). In Israel you had to be 20 years old to go to war (compared Number 1:42). So if David had 7 brothers and 3 were of fighting age, that left 4 older than him that were under 20. If we assume his mother had 1 son a year, that would make David 15 years old. Either way, he was young when he was selected by God to be the next king.

David is here called “ruddy”. This Hebrew word comes from the root “adam” and here means “reddish (of hair or complexion)” (Strong’s). This was first said about Esau in Genesis 25:25. It will only be used one more time in the Bible in 1 Samuel 17:42 (again about David).

Verse 13 – It’s worth focusing on the fact that David has God’s Holy Spirit from this point after being anointed by God’s servant Samuel. We will see immediately in verse 14 that God’s Spirit leaves Saul, yet God left Saul in power for a long time. It was only God who would decide when to remove Saul as King.

Verse 21 – Regarding David being selected to be Saul’s armorbearer, John Gill’s commentary states: “that is, he appointed him to this office, though we never read that he exercised it; nor did he go with Saul in this capacity to the battle related in the following chapter: it may be literally rendered: “and he was to him a bearer of vessels”, or “instruments”; and Abarbanel thinks this is to be understood not of instruments of war, but of instruments of music to play with; which he brought in and bare before him when he went in to the king.” [END]

I think this commentary is correct. In the 325 times this Hebrew word is used, it is most often translated as “vessel” (166x KJV) and “instrument” (39x KJV) and it here immediately followed in the Hebrew with the word meaning “to lift or take up”. It’s likely here simply saying that he became someone who took up an instrument for Saul and this seems to fit the context the most since it’s why he was called before Saul at this time.

Day 282 - MONDAY: November 6th

1 Samuel 17

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “In chapter 17 we will read about David's great courage and faith in facing Goliath, the giant. The Philistines were forever taunting their neighbors the Israelites. The Philistines were in a superior position to the Israelites in trade and technology. One way the Philistines tried to keep the Israelites subservient was by their monopoly on instruments of iron. While the iron age had come to the Philistines, the Israelites were only able to manufacture implements made of the softer bronze. The ability to forge iron weapons gave the Philistines a decided military advantage over the Israelites.

On top of that, here comes Goliath of Gath, a one-man army who, at 9 feet 9 inches, would dwarf even the tallest of today's professional basketball players! It is interesting that Goliath is mentioned as being from Gath. When the Israelites first came to the Promised Land, they encountered giants throughout it: "There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight" (Numbers 13:33). Most of them, however, were wiped out by Joshua: "And at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with

their cities" (Joshua 11:21). But notice the next verse: "None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod" (verse 22). So this unusual lineage remained in these three Philistine cities only—and Goliath, 400 years later, was from Gath. Moreover, he was, we will later find out, not the only giant from that area (see 2 Samuel 21:15-22; 1 Chronicles 20:4-8).

The Hebrew expression translated "champion" in verse 4 literally means "a man who is a go-between." Goliath offered a one-on-one, man-to-man, winner-take-all challenge to the Israelites. There were no takers. Though Saul was head and shoulders above his own people, he was certainly no match for Goliath. This presented seemingly impossible odds that virtually checkmated the king of Israel.

Three of David's oldest brothers were among the fighting men on the battlefield. Young David's responsibilities included keeping the sheep back home with an occasional trip to the front lines to bring supplies to his brothers and their leaders. Every day, morning and evening, for nearly six weeks, Goliath would come out and defy Israel to accept his challenge (verse 16). It frightened the wits out of the Israelite soldiers.

Then, one day, David happened to be there to hear Goliath's challenge. What really got to David was the blasphemous reproach brought on the armies of the living God (verse 26). The word "uncircumcised" was a clear indication that the Philistines were not in a covenant relationship with the living God as the Israelites were. Goliath was the enemy of God's people. David immediately recognized that it was wrong to allow this situation to continue.

David believed it was necessary to intervene at this momentous time. It was not a matter of pride or vainglory on his part. His motives were selfless, yet he had to endure the criticisms of his brothers (verse 28).

David had no doubt in his mind that it had been the Lord who had given him victory over the wild animals that attacked his flocks (verses 34-37). David had gained the confidence to face Goliath: "He [the Lord] will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." And: "The battle is the LORD's" (verse 47).

Besides, in his spare time while tending the sheep, David had probably sharpened his aim by practicing with his sling for hours on end, like boys today knocking tin cans off of fence posts, till he knew he wouldn't miss. "A sling was the typical equipment of a shepherd. It was a hollow pocket of leather attached to two cords. Putting a stone in the pouch, the slinger would whirl it around his head to build up momentum. Releasing one of the cords would hurl the stone at its target. Slingers were a regular part of armies in the ancient Middle East (see Judg. 20:16)" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 17:40).

It didn't matter that Saul's armor didn't fit because David knew that the entire assembly of soldiers would be shown that the Almighty, All-Powerful Lord of Hosts saves not with sword and spear (verse 47). David exhibits a remarkable faith and courage for one so young.

When David slays Goliath, the Philistines flee (verse 51), breaking their original agreement that, if their champion were defeated, they would accept servitude to the Israelites (compare verse 9). We might wonder as to whether the Philistines had originally intended to be bound by this agreement. More likely, considering the stature of Goliath, they probably had not even considered the possibility that he could be defeated. In any case, we do not find the Philistines being subservient even after they get over the shock of losing. Instead, they remain as Israel's enemies. In the wake of David's victory, Saul asks whose son he is. *The Nelson Study Bible* comments: "How does this question fit with the fact that David had been serving as a musician in Saul's court (16:18-23)? Saul's unstable mental condition (16:14, 15) may have

affected his memory. Saul may have recognized David as his court musician but forgotten the name of David's father. He would need to know it in order to reward David's family (v. 25). It is also possible that in his question, Saul's principle interest was not David's identity, but the possibility that David was a contender for the throne of Israel" (note on 17:55)." [END]

Verse 5 – John Gill states: “which made one hundred and fifty six pounds”

Verse 7 – The iron spearhead weighed “eighteen pounds twelve ounces” (Adam Clarke)

Verse 28 – Siblings can bring out the worst in each other. We aren't given any background to why Eliab spoke to his youngest brother like this. Maybe jealousy over David being anointed and also him playing his harp for the king. The oldest brother here is likely in his mid-twenties and still growing in character and maybe feels embarrassed by his youngest brother's presence and words.

John Gill's commentary states: “that he was too proud to keep sheep, and wanted to advance himself in the army, and make a figure there, and thereby gratify his vanity and ambition, which was the reverse of David's character; for, such was his humility, that, though he was anointed king, and had been preferred in Saul's court, yet condescended with all readiness to keep his father's sheep; and what he now proposed was not from any bad principle in his heart, but purely for the glory of God, and the honour of the people of Israel, who were both reproached:” [END]

Verse 29 – You can almost hear David's words to his sibling: “What have I done now?” You are always getting angry with me, what is it this time?

Verse 33 – Saul tells David he’s a “youth”. Strong’s dictionary states: “a boy from the age of infancy to adolescence”. This again reveals that David is not fighting age.

Verse 34 – In the NKJV this reads as if David “used to keep” his father’s sheep. But this isn’t a very clear translation. It’s meant to say that this is what he has been doing in his life, but not to indicate he doesn’t do it anymore. In other words “I’ve been a shepherd over my father’s sheep...”

Verse 46 – Not only do the words of David communicate his deep faith in the Almighty, but also his motivation that God would not be dishonored and in fact that all would honor God and know that the God of Israel is powerful and with them. We see in the next verse David’s clear understanding that God doesn’t work like humans and doesn’t need human ways of fighting.

Verse 48 – David in great faith and confidence, ran toward this giant and closed the gap. Was this for a strategic reason?

Verse 49 – There is a lot of conjecture as to how this happened, whether Goliath had removed his helmet, or whether David hit him in the eye. The Hebrew says he hit him in the brow or forehead and that it sank in (also could be translated “pierced” or “implanted”). It appears that this stone cracked his forehead and remained implanted within his skull.

Verse 54 – Sometimes the Bible includes details that while seeming to take place in a short amount of time, would have actually occurred over some time. This is one of those verses. David didn’t have a tent there at the battle, as he had just traveled in to check on his brothers, but seems to have taken home Goliath’s armour as a prize of sorts. David probably carried Goliath’s head when we read about the events in 1

Samuel 18:6. Goliath's giant head would have represented God's great power over Israel's enemies.

Day 283 - TUESDAY: November 7th

1 Samuel 18

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "Jonathan, the son of Saul, immediately recognized in David the qualities he most admired. For, indeed, Jonathan was as courageous as David was. (It would be helpful to go back and review the exploits of Jonathan in 1 Samuel 14:1-52, and compare them to the exploits of David, to better grasp the tremendous camaraderie that developed between them). Jonathan and David were "kindred spirits." They made a covenant pledge to always be loyal to one another (verse 3). Later, under adverse conditions, we will see them renew this friendship covenant.

David's victory over Goliath and his newfound popularity, especially with the women, would soon inflame Saul's immature jealousy. David's ongoing successes will further expose the deteriorating character of Saul (verses 6-9). The more Saul gives vent to his rage, the more unstable his mental state becomes—and the more susceptible he is to the evil spirit troubling him (16:14). Indeed, we open ourselves up to satanic influence if we do not control our anger (Ephesians 4:26-27). Saul becomes homicidal and twice tries to run David through with his spear, but David evades him. Realizing God was with David and not with him, Saul has a pathological fear of David. Not able to kill David, he gives him a responsibility that will keep him away (verses 12-13).

Samuel had anointed David to be king, but had not given David any kind of timetable. David knows to bide his time, conduct himself properly and wait on God. Even David's quiet conduct enrages Saul and causes him to fear David even more (verse 15). Saul then hatches a plot to have David killed. He stoops to using his daughter as bait to trap David,

never expecting David to survive the seemingly impossible ordeal proposed to him (verse 21).

In his own eyes David considers himself to be "lightly esteemed" (verses 18-23). Though he is destined to be king of Israel, in his innate meekness David cannot see himself in Saul's royal circle. (Here is another lesson for us to emulate—to remain humble despite the awesome divine kingship to which God has destined us.)

Saul's plot fails with David surviving and succeeding twice over. Amazingly, though Saul acknowledges that God is with David, he becomes even more the enemy of David! (verses 28-30). We will continue to see how God works out every situation to fulfill His plan for David." [END]

Verse 5 – The NKJV says everywhere Saul sent David, that David “behaved wisely”. This word means “to be circumspect, to be prudent, to wisely understand” but it also means “to have good success”. The Bible shows these two things are connected. When one obeys, fears God and applies His principles, success comes. David was being mindful of how he behaved and he was being blessed.

Verse 7 – Adam Clarke’s commentary includes: ““Though Saul has been victorious in all his battles; yet he has not had such great odds against him as David has had; Saul, indeed, has been opposed by thousands; David, by ten thousands.” We may here remark that the Philistines had drawn out their whole forces at this time: and when Goliath was slain, they were totally discomfited by the Israelites, led on chiefly by David.” [END]

Verse 13 – It seems clear that Saul wanted to get rid of David, not only from his court, but likely hoping that David would die in battle as he led his troops. On the statement “and he went out and came in before the

people”, John Gill adds “or at the head of them, as the Targum; he led them out to war, and returned with them in safety, with victory and in triumph, with great honour, and highly respected by them; quite contrary to the intention and hope of Saul.”

Verse 16 – There is a way we can lead that helps people to follow and support our leadership, or we can lead in other ways that makes people dislike and not respect us. David was a natural leader and because he submitted to and obeyed God, God gave him favor with the people.

Verse 17 – Of Saul giving Merab to David, John Gill states: “most interpreters understand it, that he was obliged to this by promise, on account of David's slaying Goliath, 1Sa 17:25; but Abarbinel is of another mind, and he rightly observes, that the words referred to are not the words of Saul, but of the men of Israel, who might suppose what the king would do; or if they heard anything like it spoken by Saul, it was only in a hyperbolical way, signifying he did not care what he gave, and what he parted with, to the man that killed the Philistine, but was not strictly bound to this particular thereby; nor did David ever claim such promise, nor did Saul think himself bound to do it, but proposes it as an instance of his great kindness and favour, as he pretended, and therefore expected great returns for it, as follows:”
[END]

We also clearly see that Saul’s intentions are dishonorable. He hopes David will die in battle.

Verse 21 – We see time and time again that Saul has bad intentions in what he does, even when on the surface it looks good.

Verse 30 – John Gill’s commentary states: “showed himself to be more expert in the art of war, and formed designs with great wisdom and prudence, and which he as wisely executed, as well as with great courage and valour, to the annoyance and defeat of the enemy, and to

the advantage, defence, and safety of the people of Israel; or he was more "prosperous" than they, as the Targum, and so others interpret it; he was more successful in his attacks on the Philistines, and in his skirmishes with them:"

Day 284 - WEDNESDAY: November 8th

1 Samuel 19 & Psalm 59

Daily Deep Dive:

1 SAMUEL 19:

The UCG reading program states: "As we study through the historical stories contained in the pages of the Bible, let's remember to look for the guidance to make our present lives more Christ-like. All passages of Scripture were given under inspiration of God's Holy Spirit for our edification, to teach us lessons and provide examples.

In the same foolish way that Satan tries to remove God from his throne, Saul, knowing that God is with David, launches an open conspiracy to destroy David. God has provided an ally in Jonathan, which affords David some needed protection. Jonathan gives his father some very sound advice, which is actually heeded by the easily persuaded Saul (verses 4-6). A good relationship between Saul and David is restored when Jonathan points out that what David had done was good for the whole country. But as soon as David wins another battle against the Philistines, Saul's jealous nature reappears. God allowed a willing evil spirit to agitate Saul's already volatile envy.

Michal, Saul's daughter, loves David and is protective of him (1 Samuel 18:20; 1 Samuel 19:11-17). David escapes and goes to Ramah to seek counsel of Samuel, whom we haven't read about for a while.

Samuel presides over a *group* of prophets (verse 20). Recall that when Saul was first anointed, he fell in with a group of prophets, who were also musicians, as Samuel said he would (1 Samuel 10:5-11). In both

cases, the original King James has "company of the prophets." Samuel had judged Israel in a circuit—from the towns of Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah yet always returning to Ramah (1 Samuel 7:15-17). As noted in the highlights for 1 Samuel 10, the prophet Elijah later presides over an association known as "the sons of the prophets," located in Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho (see 2 Kings 2). These are often referred to by commentators as the schools of the prophets, training centers of prophetic ministry. It seems likely, as the commentators also surmise, that Samuel founded these schools and that his circuit was connected with them.

This is evidence that God's desire has always been that His ministry be well educated. While Christ's original 12 apostles were "uneducated and untrained men" according to the standards of the day (Acts 4:13), they were in fact educated through the instruction they received from Christ, the role model of His life, constant study of Scripture, their Spirit-guided discussions and regular thoughtful meditation.

With David in Samuel's care, God intervened in the situation so that all those who were sent against David were overcome and, surprisingly, began to do something completely incongruous to their intention—prophesy. Even Saul, when he came to see for himself, began to prophesy—provoking a similar reaction to the one he received when he prophesied when first anointed (1 Samuel 19:24; compare 1 Samuel 10:11). "Naked," says *Barnes' Notes*, means without his robe and other outer robes, leaving only his shirt (1997, note on 19:24).

Verse 17 – We get some insight into the character of Michal. She's not like Jonathan who defended David to his father. Here she lies and paints David in a bad light for the purpose of clearing her own name before her father.

PSALM 59:

The UCG reading program states: "The superscription of Psalm 59 says that it was written upon the occasion of Saul sending assassins to stake out David's house and kill him—the event recorded in 1 Samuel 19. There are times in an individual's life when emotionally and psychologically he is "on top of the world," and there are times when a person is in "survival mode," just trying to keep it all together. Both emotional states afford opportunities to draw closer to God. When times are wonderful and prosperous, we draw nearer in our relationship to God by giving Him the credit and thanks for all He has done in our lives. But when the days are dark and our strength fails and it seems as though we won't make it, we cry out to Almighty God for sorely needed help.

In Psalm 59, David is in "survival" mode. He isn't thinking, "God will make me king." Instead, he is wondering how he will survive another day. When David flees for his life, his prayer is for deliverance from his enemies. He remembers that God is our Savior and he prays in Psalm 59 to be saved. He knows the vast mercy and power of God.

When times seem darkest, Christians can be confident that God is yet working through circumstances for their good (Romans 8:28)."

Psalm 59 is the fourth in the sequence of five Davidic *miktams* here. The request in verse 5 to "punish all the nations" does not appear related to that episode (see also verse 8). The *Zondervan NIV Study Bible* suggests: "If originally composed by David under the circumstances noted in the superscription, it must have been revised for use by one of David's royal sons [i.e., descendants] when Jerusalem was under siege by a hostile force [compare verses 6, 14] made up of troops from many nations--as when Hezekiah was besieged by the Assyrians (see 2 Kings 18:19). (Some, however, ascribe it to Nehemiah; see Nehemiah 4.)" (note on Psalm 59).

There appear to be four stanzas in the song (verses 1-5, 6-10, 11-13, 14-17). The first and third are related thematically--asking for God to punish and how to punish and each ending with *selah*. The second and fourth both begin with an identical characterization of the prowling enemy (verses 6, 14) and end with a similar refrain about God as the source of strength, defense and mercy (see verses 9b-10a, 16b-17).

The request at the end of verse 5 that God not be merciful to wicked transgressors should not be understood as a prayer that God would never grant them repentance so as to show them mercy, but that He would not leave them unpunished for their sins so long as they persisted in them.

The wicked blasphemously think they are getting away with something (see verse 7), but God will have the last laugh (verse 8). Starting with this verse, the song moves from a plea for help to assurance that God will intervene.

Verse 11 asks that the enemy not be instantly slain but scattered and abased. This was so the Israelites would not forget the punitive humbling of the enemy. Great men may fall on the battlefield and still be remembered as heroes. But if they are brought down to destitution and vagrancy, people would more readily deem them cursed. Moreover, if they were simply wiped out, people might soon forget them and what had happened to them, whereas if they were alive but shamed and disgraced, they would be around for some time as an object lesson.

Yet what are we to make of verse 13's request that the enemy be consumed in wrath till they are no more? Does this contradict verse 11? No, it is simply a matter of timing. The prayer is that the enemy would undergo a period of humiliation and scattering and only then, after the lesson had sunk in among God's people, be destroyed. And

note that this is not for personal vengeance but as a witness of God's ultimate rule (verse 13)--and of His protection and care for those who trust Him (verses 9-10, 16-17).

Other scriptures explain that God will resurrect the wicked, giving those who previously lacked adequate understanding the opportunity for repentance and salvation. "The Lord is not...willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Singing of God's mercy "in the morning" (Psalm 59:16) could mean every morning, but it seems more likely that morning here is figurative--meaning the end of this dark "day of my trouble" (same verse)." [END]

Verse 7 – The NKJV says “they belch with their mouth”. Of the 11 times this Hebrew word for “belch” is used, this is the only time it’s translated this way. It most often is translated “utter (5x)”, “pour out (3x)”. Other translations capture this in a more clear manner:

NLT – “Listen to the filth that comes from their mouths; their words cut like swords. "After all, who can hear us?" they sneer.”

ISV – “Look what pours out of their mouths! They use their lips like swords, saying "Who will hear us?"

Day 285 - THURSDAY: November 9th

1 Samuel 20

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “David tries desperately to make peace with Saul. The Scriptures show that David carried himself with wisdom and the proper decorum (18:5, 30). Each month, on the occasion of the new moon, Saul held a feast at his court—apparently an important meeting to establish the agenda for the month. All the leading men were expected to be present. There had to be a very important reason to be excused.

In chapter 20 we see David leaving Samuel and going back to Saul's capital, but David fears coming into the king's presence. David's best friend, Jonathan, can't believe his father Saul intends any harm to David. But David knows better. He tells Jonathan to cover for his absence with what sounds like a reasonable excuse, explaining that Saul's reaction will reveal his intent.

King Saul sees through the explanation Jonathan gives him to excuse David. Saul becomes extremely angry at Jonathan, reviling him and disparaging his mother (verse 30)—a form of cursing that is sadly in common usage even today. Saul rages at Jonathan that he'll never be king as long as David lives (verse 31). When Jonathan attempts to reason with his father, asking what David has done to deserve death (verse 32), Saul explodes into fury and even tries to kill Jonathan—finally convincing Jonathan that there is no hope for David to reconcile with Saul (verse 33).

Jonathan carries out the predetermined method for alerting David of the threat on his life. The two meet for an emotional goodbye. Again they pledge their love and loyalty, and that of their families in perpetuity (verses 41-42).

As a note of interest, verse 26 gives internal validation of the fact that Old Testament laws were in general use at this time. (There are some who try to argue that such laws were invented much later, in the period of Ezra after the Jewish captivity in Babylon.)” [END]

Verses 30 & 31 – It is amazing that Jonathan loved David so much that he wasn't worried about his own status and reign. Jonathan doesn't have a lot of scriptures devoted to him, but he's truly a man of remarkable character. Even criticized by his father for the very qualities that make him so amazing.

Verse 41 – The respect for each other went both ways. Here David shows respect for Jonathan and his position in the kingdom. Blood relationships are so very important, however, there can be an even more special bond when someone is joined in unity by the qualities of the Family of God.

Day 286 - FRIDAY: November 10th

1 Samuel 21, Psalm 56 & Psalm 34

Daily Deep Dive:

1 SAMUEL 21:1 - 12

The UCG reading program states: “David is too inexperienced in political matters to comprehend just how deep the subterfuge was running in Saul's regime. He makes a huge tactical error that will cost many innocent lives. This incident ushers in the beginning of a vast sea of anguish that would so characterize David's life, providing him with great depth of feeling for the inspiration of so many of his psalms that would prefigure the sufferings of the innocent Christ.

David is on the run. Innocently enough, he flees to Ahimelech, who is serving as high priest at Nob. Ahimelech is fearful, perhaps having heard rumors of the breach between Saul and David and does not want to put himself and the other priests in jeopardy by getting in the middle of any conflict. David, sensing this, lies to Ahimelech to expedite his and his men's need for sustenance and to immediately be on their way: "I'm on a secret mission for the king" (compare verse 2). The lie works for David, but this will, though unintended by him, result in terrible tragedy for the priests.

Here we also see the interesting occasion when David and his men eat the holy bread, elsewhere called showbread, which was a special grain offering to God intended only for the priests (verses 3-5; compare Exodus 25:23-30; Leviticus 24:5-9). Ahimelech is willing to feed them with it only if they are ritually pure. Perhaps this hearkens back to God's

original intent that the whole nation of Israel was to be a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6) who were to be pure in this way before their presentation before God (verse 15). David affirms the ritual purity of his men and, furthermore, argues that the bread is effectively common anyway because new bread had already replaced it before God.

Reassured, Ahimelech gives them the bread. While "the Talmud explains this apparent breach of the law on the basis that the preservation of life takes precedence over nearly all other commandments in the Law" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 21:6), this is not entirely correct—as we cannot lie, steal or commit adultery to protect human life. But preserving the lives of others clearly *is* part of the intent of God's law (compare Romans 13:10; Proverbs 24:11-12), and this *did* take precedence over the *ceremonial* laws God gave, which He intended to be observed for a limited time (compare Hebrews 9:9-10; Galatians 3:19-25). Christ explained on more than one occasion that saving life even took precedence over the general prohibition against work on the Sabbath. In its same note on David and the showbread, *The Nelson Study Bible* continues: "Jesus referred to this incident in Matt. 12:2-4; Mark 2:25, 26, in His discussion with the Pharisees concerning the Sabbath. The spirit of the Law was kept by Ahimelech's compassionate act." That much certainly *is* true, for Christ *upheld* the feeding of David with the bread.

Doeg, an Edomite loyal to Saul, sees Ahimelech give David food and Goliath's sword (verses 7-9). The account says that Doeg is there "detained before the LORD," i.e., under a spiritual vow. Subsequent events will make his religious piety questionable, however, and it is entirely possible that he undertook the vow for a wrong reason, perhaps to act as a spy among the priests. In any case, his witnessing of these events will result in severe consequences when he later passes the information on to Saul.

Though it was acceptable for David to eat the showbread, it was certainly not right for him to lie. It is even worse when we later find out that David suspected Doeg would relay what happened to Saul (22:22). But David was operating out of fear. Goliath's sword should have been a reminder of God's deliverance—but fear can cause a man to forget his priorities. (God's human servants can go from high points of strong faith to lows of fear and doubt.) David is so fearful of Saul that he flees the country into enemy Philistine territory, reasoning that he has a better chance of survival there even though he is still held in contempt by the Philistines because of his former victories over them (verses 10-11).”

Verse 5 – This bread was no longer on the table and now belonged to the priest and his family, but still was not for others, however, it was appropriate for the priest’s family to give of their food for David and his men’s lives.

Verse 6 – John Gill’s commentary includes the following: “from off of the shewbread table; and it seems to have been just taken off, it being sabbath day, and not as yet carried to the house of the priest, and divided among the other priests as usual; and which was then removed, to put hot bread, in the day that it was taken away; that is, new bread, twelve fresh cakes; for when the twelve, that had stood a week on the shewbread table were removed, twelve more were immediately put in their room, and it seems by this they were put hot there; but here arises a difficulty, how they could be put hot there, when it was not lawful to bake on a sabbath day. About this the Jews are divided; some say they were baked on the sabbath day, but the greater part say that baking did not drive away the sabbath, or it was lawful on the sabbath day; but others say that they were baked on the evening of the sabbath, and kept in the oven until the time of their being set upon the table; and, as Abarbinel observes, the mouth of the oven might be stopped up till that time to keep in the heat;” [END]

PSALM 56: The UCG reading program states: "When captured by the Philistines in Gath, David composes Psalm 56 as a prayer for relief from tormentors, his experiences on the run providing its inspiration. We see some beautiful word pictures here. God remembering David's sacrifices in His book of remembrance is described as David's tears being put into God's bottle. The American national motto, "In God We Trust"—a shortened form of the longer Pilgrim motto, "In God We Trust, God with Us"—finds its origins in verse 11, "In God I have put my trust." And David touches on the ever-present biblical theme of "walking with God."

"Psalm 56 is the first of five Davidic psalms in a row bearing the title mikhtam (56-60). As explained in the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on Psalm 16 (another mikhtam), the meaning of this word is uncertain. It may mean a writing or inscription--and could perhaps denote something first written as a poem (though we know from the examples here that these were set to music, at least at some point, and some express a desire to play instruments or sing). As noted previously, these mikhtams are all written in the face of great danger.

David complains that his enemies are many and that they hound him all day (Psalm 56:2). Having been on the run from Saul, it is likely that David was thinking a great deal about him and his forces and not just the Philistines--though they were certainly included.

David talks through his fears in prayer: "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.... In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?" (verses 3-4; compare the same basic refrain in verses 4 and 10-11; see also Psalm 118:6). It was fear of Saul that had driven David from Israel and into Philistine territory. So he was clearly learning some lessons here.

David then once more describes the actions of his enemies (Psalm 56:5-7) before again expressing trust in God to help him. The Nelson Study Bible says that "alternating passages of pain and faith are a characteristic of the lament psalms...[and] the poet typically complains about lies, the misuse of language, and deceit" (notes on Psalm 56:3-4 and verse 5).

Thinking about his life on the run and all his suffering, David knows that God is aware and keeps track of it (verse 8). David realizes God is for him--on his side (verse 9; compare Romans 8:31). God has been faithful to him in saving and helping him (Psalm 56:13)--and David will be faithful to God (verse 12)." [END]

1 SAMUEL 21:13-15: The UCG reading program states: "David reasons that it would be safer with the enemy than with Saul. But he almost gets in over his head with the Philistines. They would probably have tortured him for useful military information against Israel. By pretending to be insane, however, David renders himself not only useless to the Philistine cause, but even offensive in the royal presence of Achish (verses 12-15). The superscription at the beginning of Psalm 34 tells us how this episode ends, with the king driving David away and him departing. In this same superscription, however, it should be noted that Achish is referred to as Abimelech—this being the dynastic title of Philistine rulers for centuries, meaning "My Father Is King" (compare Genesis 20:2; 26:1). [END]

PSALM 34: The UCG reading program states: "In Psalm 34, David writes of God setting His angels about him and saving him from Achish. His words are intended to encourage others to take inspiration from these events to look to God's deliverance in all seemingly impossible trials (verses 8-14). David is essentially saying to us today that just as God saved him, He will likewise save us too. Notice verse 6: "This poor man

[David] cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

Those who trust in God will find true and ultimate happiness, as David basically assures us. Indeed, we are to put God's way of life to the test (verse 8). However, some would take verse 9 ("There is no want to those who fear Him") and read into it a "prosperity gospel," thinking that God promises to shower us with the riches of this world. Yet the word "want" here really means "lack"—and clearly implies lack of any absolute need. Indeed, our spiritual needs and our physical wants are two separate things. Verse 9 is not promising uninterrupted comfort, but that God will meet every ultimate need.

The circumstances confronting David as he wrote these words confirm this truth. A refugee from his own country because of a death sentence from his king, he found himself far from comfort—in the land of his lifelong enemies! Yet God was with him.

Consider that our *spiritual* welfare is most important. And spiritual strength can be increased when we are in physical need. The apostle Paul put it this way: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10). Of course, God is faithful to meet even our physical needs until He decides that it is time for our physical life to come to an end." [END]

Day 287 - SATURDAY: November 11th

1 Samuel 22, 1 Chronicles 12:8-18, Psalm 142, & Psalm 57

Daily Deep Dive:

1 SAMUEL 22:1-5

The UCG reading program states: "David flees from the Philistine city of Gath to a cave near the city of Adullam, "about ten miles southeast of Gath and sixteen miles southwest of Jerusalem" (*Nelson Study*

Bible, note on 1 Samuel 22:1). At first, he is a man who feels all alone with no one to help him. In that forlorn condition, David cries out to God for help and deliverance. It is with these thoughts that David composes Psalm 142.

But God answers David's prayer. His family and followers soon gather to him (1 Samuel 22:1-2). Indeed, an ever-charismatic, inspiring leader, David puts together a militia of fighting men from the tribes of Gad, Benjamin and Judah with powerful captains. We read in 1 Chronicles 12 about the makeup of this force and how God through the Holy Spirit inspires these men to accept David as their leader (verse 18). In 1 Samuel 22:2, we see that this group of men is not some noble knighthood. Rather, they are malcontents, the dregs of society, men on the run like David himself. And yet, they form a rather formidable force of about 400 men that grows to 600—the cave of Adullam being referred to in 1 Chronicles 12 as a stronghold.

Realizing that his parents are in imminent danger from King Saul, David asks the King of Moab to provide refuge for them, which is granted (verses 3-4). It is to Moab's advantage that Israel be weakened through an internal power struggle. Furthermore, David's family has Moabite connections, as his father Jesse's grandmother or earlier ancestor was Ruth, a Moabite (Ruth 1:4; Ruth 4:21-22; Matthew 1:5).” [END]

Read: 1 Chronicles 12:8-18

Verse 8 – The JFB commentary states: “A fierce, lion-like countenance (2Sa 1:23), and great agility in pursuit (2Sa 2:18), were qualities of the highest estimation in ancient warfare.”

Verse 14 – John Gill’s commentary states: “not that they were so when they came, or brought over such a number of men with them under their command; but they were promoted by David, when he came to

the throne, to be centurions and chiliarchs; according to Jarchi, the sense is, that the least of them would put to flight and pursue one hundred, and the greatest of them 1000, and so fulfilled the passage in Lev 26:8."

PSALM 142: The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 142 is a *maskil*, an instructive psalm or "contemplation" (NKJV), the third prayer in the sequence of five in which David asks for deliverance from persecutors. The occasion here, as the title notes, is "when he was in the cave." This could refer to either of two episodes when David fled from King Saul. One was into the cave at Adullam (1 Samuel 22:1, 1 Samuel 22:4), 16 miles southwest of Jerusalem, and the other was into the cave at En Gedi (1 Samuel 24:1-22), the oasis near the Dead Sea . Another psalm is linked with the episode at En Gedi (Psalm 57). And that episode does not fit the sense of abject loneliness and abandonment described in Psalm 142. It appears far more likely that David's time at Adullam is the subject of this psalm, as we will see.

David desperately pours out his heart to God. As if the secret plotting against him were not enough, he now feels alone and forsaken, lamenting that there is no one at his right hand—that no one acknowledges him and no one cares about him (verse 4). *The Nelson Study Bible* comments: "With enemies on every path, David screams to God that he is defenseless. The armed soldier in ancient Israel probably would have had his spear or sword in his right hand and his shield in his left. The shield of one man would protect the right side of his neighbor. David cries that there is no one on his right side" (note on verses 3-5). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* adds, "The 'right' signifies the place where one's witness or legal council stood (cf. Psalm 16:8; Psalm 109:31; Psalm 110:5; Psalm 121:5)" (note on verses 3c-4).

This situation might not at first glance seem to match the details of David's experience at Adullam, for 1 Samuel 22 says that his family

gathered to him there and that a large group of malcontents soon banded together there under his leadership—a formidable force of 400 men that later surged to 600, with this base camp being referred to in 1 Chronicles 12 as a stronghold. Yet realize that David first arrived there by himself. We should therefore understand Psalm 142 as describing his feelings between the first and second sentences of 1 Samuel 22:1—before his family and others showed up, when he was all alone.

Of course, David understood that he was not *totally* alone. With no other human being to lean on, David still has Someone to turn to. He cries out to God, "You are my refuge" (Psalm 142:5; compare Psalm 46) and "my portion in the land of the living" (Psalm 142:5). Thus, even in his despair as a fugitive hiding out in a cave, David still views God as His share in life, which he is still blessed to be living.

Moreover, David has faith that God will send help and abundance his way, including a support crowd (verse 7). How wonderful it is to know that this is just what happened not long after David prayed his heartfelt prayer. On top of that, he eventually became the king of Israel. And more important still, he will ultimately share possession of the universe as a divine king in God's eternal royal family—as will all of us who continue to follow God." [END]

1 SAMUEL 22:6-23: The UCG reading program states: "Saul has become a coercive, wrathful man full of curses for his son and his soldiers—essentially calling them a bunch of dirty double-crossers (verses 7-8). His paranoia indicates that he is losing his grip on reality. Such paranoia often accompanies demonic influence. His jealous and unreasonable anger toward those in his high command reminds one of the aberrations of Hitler and other corrupt rulers of history.

Doeg the Edomite, seeking to ingratiate himself with Saul, tells the king what he had witnessed—that the high priest Ahimelech had helped David (verses 9; 21:7).

Ahimelech explains that he considered David to be a faithful servant of Saul (verse 14). Nevertheless, Saul orders that Ahimelech be put to death along with all of the priests! It is such a heinous order that, to their credit, Saul's men refuse to carry it out (verse 17). But Doeg is up to the gruesome task. He puts to the sword 85 priests, their wives, children and animals.

It is interesting to consider here that, although Doeg's actions were inexcusable, God apparently used him to carry out part of the curse He had placed on Eli (compare 1 Samuel 2:27-36). These priests and their families were probably all Eli's descendants. Only Abiathar escapes—and he will eventually be deposed by Solomon. God often uses unrighteous men and circumstances in carrying out His will (see our article "[Twist of Fate](#)").

Still, Saul proves himself an evil tyrant by this wholesale slaughter. He has done in anger to the many priests of God and their families what he was unwilling to do, at God's command, to Israel's enemy King Agag of the Edomite Amalekites (see 1 Samuel 15). And Saul has committed this atrocity by the *hand* of an Edomite. He is clearly becoming more and more deranged.

But it is David who will feel the burden of responsibility in the matter and suffer the pain of guilt. He laments to Abiathar, the one escapee of Saul's carnage, "It's all my fault. I've caused the death of all your relatives" (compare verse 22). In Psalm 52 we see how David brings this unbearable burden to God in prayer, asking God's vengeance on Doeg along with all those who love evil, and to avenge those who love

righteousness. David ends his Psalm with the sure faith that God will come through—we have only to wait on Him.” [END]

PSALM 52: The UCG reading program states: “Psalm 52 is a *maskil* (perhaps meaning instructive psalm or, as the NKJV translates it, "contemplation") of David—the first of four of these in a row. Recall that Saul then ordered his men to execute Ahimelech and the other priests at Nob—which his men refused to do, whereupon Doeg carried out Saul's order, slaughtering 85 priests plus additional men, women, children, infants and animals living in the city (verses 18-19). To the one son who escaped, David lamented that he was to blame for having put the priests in jeopardy (verse 22).

In Psalm 52, written on that occasion, David questions the intelligence of any "mighty" man that would boast about doing evil since God's love and goodness will not be thwarted. Those who use their tongue for evil—such as in lying and passing on information to hurt innocent people—will be destroyed.

Doeg was apparently a wealthy man (verse 7)—perhaps having his pockets lined through spying and other misdeeds. Saul may have rewarded him handsomely after his massacre of the priests. Yet it is foolish to trust in money and evil accomplishments. This verse connects Psalm 52 with Psalm 49, concerning "those who trust in their wealth and boast in the multitude of their riches" (verse 6). Both psalms show that this is the way to destruction.

In contrast to the wicked, who will be uprooted from the land of the living (Psalm 52:5), David says that he is like an olive tree (verse 8), which lives for hundreds of years. Indeed, planted securely "in the house of God"—ultimately not the ancient tabernacle but the family and Kingdom of God—he and the rest of the saints will flourish under the attentive care of the Master "forever and ever" (verses 8-9). The

picture of the righteous as flourishing green trees ties back to the imagery of Psalm 1." [END]